

REMARKS

Claims 1-4, 6, 8-12, 14-16, and 18-30 are pending in the present application. In view of the following remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of the Application.

Rejections under 35 USC § 103(a)

The Examiner states that claims 1-3, 6, 8-10, 14-16, and 18-30 are rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Walker et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,085,169 [hereinafter "*Walker*"], in view of Jung, U.S. Patent No. 4,775,936 [hereinafter "*Jung*"], and further in view of Litman et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,990,457 [hereinafter "*Litman*"]. *Final Action*, 6. Applicant respectfully traverses in light of, at least, the following remarks.

THE CITED REFERENCES DO NOT TEACH THE USE OF MAXIMUM INVENTORY ALLOTMENT IN COMBINATION WITH TOTAL INVENTORY AVAILABLE.

Independent Claim 1

With respect to claim 1, the Examiner asserts that *Walker* teaches "an allotment database for storing maximum inventory allotments corresponding to inventory categories for each tier." Applicant disagrees. *Walker* teaches a straight distribution system, not maximum inventory allotments.

The Examiner admits that *Walker* fails to disclose "whereby a total of the maximum inventory allotments for all tiers in a single inventory category is greater than a total inventory available for the single inventory category," but asserts that *Jung* teaches this part of claim 1, at column 2, lines 20-25. This section of *Jung* teaches calculating a recommended **overbooking** level to produce maximum revenue while minimizing the number of dissatisfied customers. In no conceivable way is this teaching

the same or similar to “a total of the maximum inventory allotments for all tiers in a single inventory category is greater than a total inventory available for the single inventory category.”

Jung teaches an overbooking system that allows for overbooking of inventory. This is contrary to claim 1. Claim 1 recites, in part, that “an allotment engine [is] ... configured to allow a reservation ... if a reservation request is for less than or equal to the maximum inventory allotment ... and the reservation request is for **less than or equal to the total inventory available**,” thus clearly not allowing overbooking (see also [0061] for a discussion on preventing overbooking). As such, *Jung* teaches away from the present Application.

The Examiner asserts that support for allowing a reservation for a particular inventory category if a reservation request is less than or equal to the maximum inventory available may be found in *Litman*. However, the cited portions of *Litman* merely disclose an inventory database that stores a number of rooms available (i.e., total inventory available). Based on a hotel availability request, a list of hotels that meet parameters of the request (including availability) are returned. In fact, *Litman* teaches a pure, straight allotment system, which is not the same as “an allotment engine configured for monitoring the maximum inventory allotments for each tier and the total inventory available for each inventory category and configured to allow a reservation for a particular inventory category if a reservation request is for less than or equal to the maximum inventory allotment for the tier associated with a requesting user and the reservation request is for less than or equal to the total inventory available,” as set forth in claim 1.

The system of *Litman* teaches nothing more than a simple search engine that finds available inventory. While *Litman* may provide determining if a request is less than or equal to the total inventory, there is no teaching or suggestion for allowing a reservation for a particular inventory category if a reservation request is less than or equal to the maximum inventory allotment for the tier. In fact, there appears to be no teaching whatsoever of tier or maximum inventory allotments as set forth in claim 1. As

such, the limitation of “allow[ing] a reservation ... if a reservation request is for less than or equal to the maximum inventory allotment ... and the reservation request is for less than or equal to the total inventory available” is not taught or suggested by *Litman* or any of the other cited references.

The Applicant respectfully notes that simply breaking apart each claim element piecemeal is not appropriate. Certainly if claim elements were divided up into individual words, eventually prior art that disclosed each word could be found, but citing various prior art references that mention “reservation requests” simply does not mean these prior art references teach claim 1 of the present application. In fact, *Walker*, *Jung*, and *Litman*, either singularly or in combination fail to teach claim 1. “The mere fact that references can be combined or modified does not render the resultant combination obvious unless the results would have been predictable to one of ordinary skill in the art.” KSR International Co. v. Teleflex Inc., 550 U.S. ___, ___, 82 USPQ2d 1385, 1396 (2007). At the very most, the combination of the references cited by the Examiner might yield a straight distribution system in which straight distribution is sometimes ignored in order to overbook in a manner that maximizes revenues, but minimizes customer dissatisfaction. This simply does not teach claim 1 of the present application.

Furthermore, the straight allotment system teaches away from the “system for efficient distribution of inventory allotments among a plurality of tiers” set forth in claim 1. *Jung* teaches an overbooking system which allows for overbooking of inventory. However, claim 1 is directed to a maximum allotment system which does not allow for overbooking. Claim 1 recites:

“an allotment database for storing maximum inventory allotments corresponding to inventory categories for each tier, whereby a total of the maximum inventory allotments for all tiers in a single inventory category is greater than a total inventory available for the single inventory category; and

an allotment engine configured for monitoring the maximum inventory allotments for each tier and the total inventory available for each inventory category, and configured to allow a reservation for a particular inventory category if a reservation

request is for less than or equal to the maximum inventory allotment for the tier associated with a requesting user and the reservation request is for less than or equal to the total inventory available.”

As such, *Jung* also teaches away from claim 1. Furthermore, since *Walker*, *Litman*, and *Schiff* teach a straight allotment system which prevents overbooking and *Jung* teaches an overbooking system, there is no motivation to combine these references as they teach away from each other. Therefore, the independent claim 1 is allowable over the cited references.

Independent Claims 8, 15, 16, 20, and 21

Because independent claims 8, 15, 16, 20, and 21 incorporate similar limitations of claim 1, claims 8, 15, 16, 20, and 21 are allowable for at least the same reasons as those of claim 1.

Dependent Claims 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 14, 18, 19, and 22-30

The Examiner rejected claims 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 14, 18, 19, and 22-30 under 35 USC § 103(a). The Applicant respectfully disagrees in that claims 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 14, 18, 19, and 22-30 depend from otherwise allowable claims as discussed in detail herein. “A claim in dependent form shall be construed to incorporate by reference all the limitations of the claim to which it refers.” 35 USC § 112, ¶ 4. As *Jung* and *Litman* do nothing to overcome the absent teachings of *Walker*, the Applicant contends that dependent claims 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 14, 18, 19, and 22-30 are allowable over *Walker* in view of *Jung* and further in view of *Litman* for at least the same reasons as the independent claim from which they depend.

Dependent Claims 4, 11, and 12

The Examiner states that claims 4, 11, and 12 are rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Walker*, in view of *Jung*, in view of *Litman*, and further in view of *Schiff et al.*, U.S. Publication No. 2003/0004760 [hereinafter “*Schiff*”]. *Final Action*, 19. Applicant respectfully traverses in light of, at least, the following remarks.

The Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's rejection of claims 4, 11, and 12, in that claims 4, 11, and 12 depend from otherwise allowable claims as discussed in detail herein. "A claim in dependent form shall be construed to incorporate by reference all the limitations of the claim to which it refers." 35 USC § 112, ¶ 4. As *Jung*, *Litman*, and *Schiff* do nothing to overcome the absent teachings of *Walker*, the Applicant contends that dependent claims 4, 11, and 12 are allowable over *Walker* in view of *Jung*, in view of *Litman*, and further in view of *Schiff* for at least the same reasons as the independent claim from which they depend.

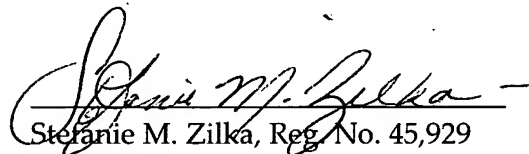
CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing remarks, Applicant believes the rejections to the claims have been overcome, and that the present application is in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to contact the Applicant's undersigned representative with any questions concerning this matter.

Respectfully submitted,
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